



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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TO: Marin County Health Care Providers

FROM: Nathalie Bera, MD, MPH, Deputy Public Health Officer

RE: Marin County Public Health Update: Influenza

We are writing to provide a few updates on influenza. Documents and recommendations released from the state health department today may be accessed from the Marin County website home page – www.co.marin.ca.us - under “Flu Information in Marin”. Once you arrive to the flu website, you will find the documents, as well as some flyers for use, under the section “Information for Clinicians”; these documents should be posted there by later today or tomorrow.

EPIDEMIOLOGY & TRENDS

As per Kaiser surveillance, Kaiser throughout Northern California had record numbers again last week (Nov 30 - Dec 6) - 390 tests positive for Influenza A, 2 tests positive for Influenza B, and a small number of RSV positives. The peak does not appear to have been reached yet. Hospitalizations are increasing as well with most so far in Roseville, Vallejo, San Rafael, Sacramento, South Sacramento, and Santa Rosa. The East Bay and North Bay are also being affected in the schools so hospitalizations would be expected to increase there shortly. During the week ending November 29 (week 48), the U.S influenza activity continued to increase. Approximately 40% of collected specimens were positive for influenza. The CDC has antigenically characterized 157 influenza A (H3N2) viruses collected since October 1 and found 29% similar to the vaccine strain and 71% similar to the drift variant (A/Fujian/411/2002(H3N2)). It is expected that the current U.S. vaccine will offer some cross-protective immunity against the drift variant. Data from the WHO indicate ~25% specimens positive for influenza; 99% influenza A and the remainder influenza B.

As a reminder, individual cases of influenza are not reportable but **outbreaks** of influenza in institutions should be reported to the Marin County Communicable Disease Unit (#499.7805).

VACCINE & ANTIVIRALS

Vaccine recommendations are included in the state documents. An excellent reference for this is the MMWR article from 4/25/03: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5208a1.htm

In Marin County at this time a limited number of vaccine doses exist - at individual providers' offices, the County Immunization Clinic, and other community sites (please see Marin County influenza website for sites where immunizations are being given). The County is working with the state health department to secure additional doses and we are awaiting the number of doses which will be available to us.

This is a reminder too that antivirals should be considered for prophylaxis of high-risk household contacts of confirmed influenza cases. The MMWR article has a very informative section on antivirals which discusses other indications for prophylactic use of antivirals including in outbreak situations.

Lastly, FluMist (live attenuated influenza vaccine) can be used for healthy individuals age 5-49 years and Wyeth (the manufacturer of FluMist; #800-358-7443) has doses remaining for providers to order. They had ~ 4 million doses as of 12/5/03.

RESPIRATORY HYGIENE PROGRAM

This is especially important in the control of influenza, discussed in the attached documents (e.g. mask and tissues, hand washes or soap/water, etc). Our influenza website, under "Information for Clinicians", also has several 'cough' flyers - one from Marin County (PDF and Word format) and one from the state - that can be used if needed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (for patients & providers, updated regularly)

CDC www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/index.htm

California Dept of Health Services www.dhs.ca.gov and click "Read More" on flu

Marin County www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/HH/News/Flu_Information_in_Marin.cfm

Sincerely,

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